



News Release

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Utah Department of Health Adopts Tobacco-Free Campus Policy

UDOH Urges Other Agencies to Choose Clean Air

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Starting July 1, 2007, anyone visiting or working for the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) will either need to find somewhere else to light up or quit smoking. The UDOH has adopted a tobacco-free policy for its buildings and grounds, and cessation services are offered to those who want to kick the habit.

“Going smoke-free is just the right thing to do,” said Dr. David Sundwall, UDOH Executive Director. “Not only is smoke an irritant for non-smoking staff and patrons, but secondhand smoke can cause lung cancer, heart disease, and illness in children. We couldn’t in good conscience allow open smoking on our grounds any longer,” he said.

The goal of the tobacco-free policy is to improve the health of UDOH employees and visitors by both reducing exposure to secondhand smoke and promoting quitting. Cutting tobacco use also increases productivity, lowers absenteeism, and reduces medical and other costs associated with tobacco use in the workplace.

UDOH buildings have been smoke-free since 1995, in compliance with the Utah Indoor Clean Air Act, but until the enactment of this policy, patrons and employees had been able to smoke 25 feet away from entrances and anywhere on the outdoor campus. Smoking will now be banned on all UDOH grounds, including sidewalks and parking lots.

“We urge other government agencies and businesses to adopt similar policies,” stated Dr. Sundwall. “The UDOH and our partners will provide free advice and assistance throughout the implementation process to anyone who needs it.” The Utah Tobacco Quit Line and Utah QuitNet are two such services. To learn more, call 1-888-567-TRUTH, or log on to www.utahquitnet.com.

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More than 200,000 Utahns currently use tobacco. Each year, more than 1,100 Utah adults die as a result of their own smoking, and an estimated 140 to 250 adults, children, and infants die due to secondhand smoke exposure. The Utah economy loses a staggering \$530 million annually to smoking-related medical and productivity costs.

The U.S. Surgeon General has stated there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke; that even brief exposure can be dangerous. The Environmental Protection Agency classifies secondhand smoke as a Class A carcinogen, the most dangerous category of cancer-causing agents.

Tobacco-free environments are a national and international trend, with new policies being enacted in businesses, parks, and other environments almost daily. Utah is part of this trend, and the UDOH is a leader in protecting the health of its citizens.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.